United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General condemns "deliberate" Bosnian Serb attack on French UNPROFOR troops in Sarajevo on Sunday; calls on parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to honour cease-fire agreement and to negotiate settlement in Geneva.

+ Talks to end war in Bosnia and Herzegovina begin in Geneva; Presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, and leaders of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats participate.

+ Croatia calls on Security Council to stop attacks by Muslim forces on Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Nepalese UNIFIL headquarters bombed by Israeli aircraft; three personnel slightly injured; Force Commander protests incident and urges Israeli military to exercise maximum restraint.

+ Economic Committee, concluding current session, recommends draft resolutions and draft decisions for action by Economic and Social Council on topics ranging from natural resources to global strategies for combating AIDS.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has condemned an attack by Bosnian Serbs on French troops of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Sarajevo on Sunday. In a statement issued yesterday, the Secretary-General said the UNPROFOR troops had been subjected to artillery, mortar and tank fire; none had been harmed, but one armoured personnel carrier had been destroyed and four had been badly damaged.

UNPROFOR vehicles were painted white and were clearly marked, and there could have been no mistake as to their identity, the Secretary-General pointed out. UNPROFOR had established that the attack was deliberate, notwithstanding allegations to the contrary by the Bosnian Serbs. An attack on UNPROFOR, which had been deployed, inter alia, to support the humanitarian efforts of the international community, was an attack on the entire people of Bosnia and

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Herzegovina who depended on the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance, he said.

The Secretary-General demanded that such actions against UNPROFOR and against the population of Sarajevo cease immediately, and called on all parties to honour the cease-fire agreement which had been due to take effect throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Sunday. He urged the parties to resolve matters at the negotiating table, with the help of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia.

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Talks to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina began today in Geneva and were "proceeding and progressing", although a plenary meeting had not yet been held, according to a United Nations spokesman. Participating at the talks were: Alija Izetbegovic, President of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs; Mate Boban, leader of the Bosnian Croats; Franjo Tudjman, President of Croatia; Slobodan Milosevic, President of Serbia; and Moomir Bulatovic, President of Montenegro.

Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, had already met with the Serbian and Bosnian delegations, as well as with President Bulatovic and the Bosnian Presidency, the spokesman said. The Co-Chairmen had also met with the Special Envoys of the United States and the Russian Federation, who were participating informally in the proceedings.

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Croatia has called on the Security Council to take measures to stop attacks by Muslim forces against Croat-inhabited regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, stating that Croats had suffered most from "ethnic cleansing" in the country. In a letter to the Council dated 23 July, Croatia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations called attention to the "tremendous humanitarian catastrophe" which had befallen the Bosnian Croats. He said that on many occasions they had not received sufficient attention from the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) or from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"As long as the Bosnian Croats continue to find themselves in such severe conditions, especially in central Bosnia, and as long as the Security Council is unwilling to address their plight, my Government will have difficulty in successfully influencing events which may lead to a peaceful settlement for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina," the Permanent Representative said.

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The headquarters of the Nepalese battalion serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was hit by at least two bombs

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dropped by Israeli aircraft today, according to a United Nations spokesman. Three Nepalese personnel were slightly injured and several buildings and vehicles were destroyed in the attack.

The Force Commander of UNIFIL visited the headquarters and then contacted the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) liaison unit to protest the incident in the strongest terms, the spokesman said. The Force Commander, on behalf of the Secretary-General, urged the IDF to exercise maximum restraint in their actions, and said a written protest would be delivered when the incident had been fully investigated.

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The Economic Committee of the Economic and Social Council concluded its work for the current session yesterday by approving several draft resolutions and draft decisions on topics ranging from natural resources to global strategies for combating acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). All the measures were approved without a vote, except for a draft resolution by which the Council would deplore the establishment of Israeli settlements in Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and would assert the right of the original populations to water and other resources there. That proposal was approved in a roll-call vote of 40 in favour to 1 against (United States), with 3 abstentions (Japan, Poland and the Russian Federation).

Among the items which are expected to be acted on by the Council this week is a draft resolution which would recommend that the restructuring of United Nations activities in the economic, social and related fields include steps to strengthen the effectiveness of the regional economic commissions. Another draft would call for strengthening efforts to aid the spread of new technologies to help the industrialization of developing countries.

The draft resolution relating to AIDS would support the decision of the World Health Organization (WHO) to study for two years the feasibility of a United Nations programme on the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and AIDS. It would also ask the Secretary-General to include the outcome of the study in his next biennial report on progress in the implementation of a global strategy for combating and preventing AIDS.

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